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OFF-LIMITS FOR NATO

Democratic Germany Defines Stand on Berlin

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has no rights of any kind in West Berlin, the Government of the German Democratic stated on December 21st. "The NATO Declaration (of December 18th 1958) is a flagrant interference in the affairs of the German Democratic Republic" the Government statement said.

The North Atlantic Council, meeting in Paris from December 16th—18th, issued a declaration stating that the Soviet proposals for a solution of the problem of West Berlin had "created a serious situation which must be faced with determination". The NATO Council announced its "full association" with the statement issued by the western Big Three and West Germany on December 14th, which "reaffirmed the determination of their Governments to maintain their position and their rights with respect to Berlin, including the right of free access".

In its reply the Government of the German Democratic Republic pointed out that these interlocking guarantees meant that all members of the NATO alliance were thereby in danger of being dragged into warlike adventures. The Government declaration said in part:

"The attempt to make the question of West Berlin into a NATO affair proves how necessary it is to remove finally the centre of disturbance in West Berlin, and to normalise the situation in West Berlin. . .

"The alleged readiness of the NATO states to take part in negotiations on 'Germany as a whole' is only a fraudulent attempt to confuse and to appease public opinion. It ignores the fact that the restoration of Germany's national unity is exclusively a matter for the two German states. The NATO has no right to make any decisions on this question. The responsibility for this question rests exclusively with the Germans.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic has never left the slightest doubt as to this fact, while the West German Government has, up to the present, made no attempt to reach a real understanding. The new attempt to create a junctim with the question of German reunification is nothing more than an attempt to prevent the preparation of a peace treaty, and to prevent the solution of the problem of West Berlin.

"The Soviet initiative for the peaceful solution of the West Berlin problem is of great importance for the solution of the German question. For this reason it has been welcomed by the Government of the German Democratic Republic, although it demands from the German Democratic Republic the great concession that the Republic will not be able to exercise in West Berlin its rights of sovereignty which extend to the whole of Berlin.

"If the western powers and the West German Government would also base their policy upon the maintenance of peace, then the problem of West Berlin could be quickly settled, and a state of quietness and peace could be established in the whole of Berlin.

"The NATO has no rights of any sort in West Berlin, and such 'rights' can never be created by the unilateral decisions of some sort of conference. The NATO can also not 'construct' any such rights. Any attempt to do so can only lead to a further sharpening of the whole situation. The German Democratic Republic, and all other peaceable powers cannot allow, and will never allow, West Berlin to become a NATO protectorate.

"The NATO Declaration is a flagrant interference in the affairs

(cont. on next page)

Grotewohl to Visit Cairo & New Delhi

Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, was scheduled to leave Berlin for an extended trip through Africa and Asia early in January. He was due to visit Cairo, Bagdad, New Delhi and Hanoi, and was expected to have talks with leading African and Asian statesmen in these capitals.

This will be the first trip outside the countries of the socialist family to be undertaken by Prime Minister Grotewohl.

Off-Limits for NATO

(cont. from front page)

of the German Democratic Republic: the Government of the German Democratic Republic protests strongly against this declaration.

"The transfer to the German Democratic Republic of the functions with regard to Berlin carried out for the time being by Soviet organs is an important step towards a normalisation of the situation in Berlin. Every attempt to interfere with this transfer is useless, and can only make a peaceful solution of the West Berlin problem more difficult.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic is determined to carry out these functions in a spirit of understanding. The Government is prepared to make agreements on all problems connected with a peaceful solution of the West Berlin problem, and the taking-over of the functions carried out for the time being by the Soviet organs.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic believes that the conditions exist which will allow a speedy solution of the West Berlin problem in a peaceful sense if good will is shown by all concerned."

DOCUMENTS FOR THE RECORD

Here, for the record, are the relevant passages of the declarations on Berlin and Germany issued in Paris during December 1958:

Statement issued by the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France, USA and West Germany on December 14th:

"The Foreign Ministers once more reaffirmed the determination of their Governments to maintain their position and their rights with respect to Berlin, including the right of free access.

"They found unacceptable a unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Government of its obligations to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States in relation to their presence in Berlin and the freedom of access to that city, or the substitution of the German authorities in the Soviet zone for the Soviet Government (in so far as those rights are concerned.)

(The sentence quoted in brackets was mysteriously omitted from the official West German text of the statement, ed. GDR.)

"After further discussion of the Soviet Notes of November 27th 1958 the four Foreign Ministers found themselves in agreement on the basic issues to be dealt with in the replies to those notes . . ."

Statement issued by the Nato Council in Paris on December 16th:

"The North Atlantic Council examined the question of Berlin. The council declares that no State has the right to withdraw unilaterally from its international engagements. It considers that the denunciation by the Soviet Union of the inter-allied agreements on Berlin can in no way deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations . . . The council fully associates itself with the views expressed on the subject by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in their statement of December 14th.

"The demands expressed by the Soviet Government have created a serious situation which must be faced with determination . . . The member-States of NATO could not approve a solution of the Berlin question which jeopardised the right of the three western powers to remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it, and did not assure freedom of communication between that city and the free world. The Soviet Union would be responsible for any action which had the effect of hampering this free communication or endangering this freedom . . .

"The council considers that the Berlin question can only be settled in the framework of an agreement with the USSR on Germany as a whole . . ."

E. GERMAN FILMS FOR LONDON

A series of some of the best films made during the past 12 years by DEFA, the film company of the German Democratic Republic, will be shown at the National Film Theatre in London between January 21st and February 8th.

Readers of GERMAN REPORT are urged to take this opportunity to see some of the really outstanding films from the German Democratic Republic. Here are short details of some of the films being shown:

"The Murderers Are Amongst Us", the first and perhaps the best of all post-war German films, deals with the question of war criminals who have returned to civilian life in post-war Germany. This film brought film-star Hildegard Neff to the screen for the first time.

"The Blum Case" tells of anti-Semitism in Germany before Hitler came to power. A film everybody should see.

"The Kaiser's Lackey", based on the novel "Der Untertan" by Heinrich Mann, is an uproarious comedy, with a serious purpose, about life in Kaiser Wilhelm's days.

"Stronger than the Night" is a gripping story of the anti-fascist underground in Hitler's Germany.

"The Council of the Gods" tells the story of the IG Farben Trust, the great chemical monopoly which provided the Zyklon gas for Hitler's gas chambers.

The other films to be shown are "Rotation", "Recovery", "The Captain of Cologne", and "Born in 1921".

Feuchtwanger Dies

Lion Feuchtwanger, leading German author, died in California on December 21st 1958 at the age of 74. Feuchtwanger, who was an uncompromising anti-fascist, was forced to leave Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933. Since 1940 he had lived in the USA. His most famous books, translated into many languages, included "Jew Suess", "The Ugly Duchess", and "Josephus".

Most of his books were boycotted by West German publishers after the war, but appeared in large editions in the German Democratic Republic. He was awarded the National Prize of the Democratic Republic in 1953.

Soviet General on Berlin

The Soviet Union wishes to settle the Berlin question in a calm atmosphere, without cold war threats, General M. V. Zakharov, commander of the Soviet troops stationed in the German Democratic Republic, stated in an interview with ADN, the East German news agency, on December 19th.

"American military circles, in particular, are attempting to create a war psychosis in connection with the Berlin question" General Zakharov stated. "At a press conference in West Berlin on November 30th General H.I. Hodes, Commander of the United States Army in Europe stated that 'American troops will stay in West Berlin' and that 'any action against the U.S. Garrison in West Berlin will be regarded as an action against the United States'.

"General Hodes thereby excluded the possibility of a peaceful solution of the German problem, rattled his sword, and stated that 'various different secret plans' for joint action with the British and French troops in West Germany had been worked out. Amongst the western military men there are even hotheads who propose clearing a path to Berlin with the aid of troops and tanks.

"It would be possible to ignore such statements if they came from irresponsible journalists or from retired generals: but General Hodes occupies a high post and has great powers ...

"If the American military clique really intends to launch a military conflict, effective measures will certainly be found to bring them to heel. The German Democratic Republic is not without protection. The Soviet forces stationed in the German Democratic Republic, together with the People's Army of the German Democratic Republic, will decisively counter all attempts by the occupiers to prevent the normalisation of the situation in West Berlin. They are ready to give a decisive reply to any aggressor who should attempt to infringe upon the frontiers of the German Democratic Republic by land, sea or air.

"It is clear that they would thereby receive the support of the forces of all the countries united in the Warsaw Pact, whose slogan is 'one for all, and all for one'.

"Such a development would, however, undoubtedly lead to the unleashing of a conflict which could not be localised, but which would implicate many peoples and many states, and would bring immeasurable suffering to humanity.

"General Hodes, with his personal knowledge of the aggressive war of the imperialists against the Korean people should know full well how an armed attack on one of the countries of the socialist camp tends to end. If General Hodes is trying to intimidate the Soviet Union, and to shake its determination to take measures connected with the elimination of the occupation regime in West Berlin, then he is making a mistake.

"By breaking the Potsdam Agreement, the USA, Britain and France have lost every right to remain in West Berlin. As the Soviet Government has repeatedly declared, no threats will prevent it from implementing the intended measures in the interests of all peoples."

"ARGUS SQUINTS"

W. German Paper Criticises Security Service

The West German newspaper "Nürnberger Nachrichten" stated on December 19th 1958:

During the first years of the Federal Republic it was still customary to observe and criticise the reappearance of former National Socialists. Eight years later it is possible for SS leader Reinefarth to be elected to a West German parliament and his most convincing critic to be silenced by his Prime Minister. There is more than one explanation for the successful restoration of many prominent figures of the national socialist era. One important cause may very well be that ideas and even organisations of the nazi period still exist, but that our Office for the Protection of the Constitution has for years devoted its efforts to the persecution and suppression of communist and similar tendencies. Argus squints with his left eye.

We should not care to be misunderstood. Control of communism is necessary and should not be neglected. But it is not an end in itself; it should help to protect the constitution, that is, the free legal order of our society. It therefore does not entirely fulfil its purpose if the protectors of the constitution, in their enthusiasm against communism, do not see that the constitution is threatened by other enemies. That is the situation in which the Federal Republic is placed at present.

At the beginning of the 1930's and after his seizure of power, Hitler himself was responsible for closing the eyes of many Germans to the dangers of national socialism by exaggerating the dangers of bolshevism. This sequence of events threatens us again.

But we should like to avoid a second misunderstanding here. A return of nazism in its earlier form is extremely unlikely. It would therefore be ridiculous for our protectors of the constitution, including private citizens, to look for secret local meetings or brown shirt factories. History does not repeat itself in such a simple way. The danger which threatens us, on the one hand, is that the past can be made to appear harmless, somewhat in the way in which "Panzer Meyer" tries to make us believe today that the Waffen SS were searching for God. And on the other hand there is the threat represented by a constant trickle of former prominent nazis into important positions in the political and economic life in the Federal Republic.

These people can then help each other further. There is no need to set up a special organisation. It is quite enough that these former nazis know of each other, so that if one of them gets into difficulties the others can help him.

A typical case is that of Zind who, in the opinion of many people in Offenburg, was treated very badly. He had no difficulty whatever in getting a post in a chemical factory in his home town even after his conviction. But the journalist in Bremen, who was accused by the local Office for the Protection of the Constitution

of having connections with the East Zone press, was treated differently. Not a word of the accusation was true, but he was completely out of favour until the affair could be cleared up. If only he had been an anti-Semite, an SS leader or a nazi party functionary, Argus — and also the Argus in the ordinary citizen — would at least have closed an eye, which unfortunately happens so often that Argus already squints.

SS General With "Resistance Record"

SS General Heinz Reinefarth, the butcher of Warsaw, who was recently elected a member of the Schleswig Holstein Provincial Parliament, claimed on December 17th 1958 that he had really been an anti-nazi resister all the time.

The Reinefarth case came into the news again on December 15th, when the nazi war criminal attempted to speak for the first time in the Provincial Parliament. As he rose to speak, the Social Democratic members of the parliament applied for an indefinite adjournment of the house.

In his statement ex-General Reinefarth claimed that he had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General of the SS against his own wishes. "I not only did not serve the criminal system of National Socialism, but on the contrary I fought against the nonsensical and criminal elements of this system at the risk of my own liberty and life" he claimed.

Here are the facts: Reinefarth made a meteoric career in the nazi police and SS, rising from the rank of sergeant at the beginning of World War Two to the rank of Lieutenant General at its end. Documentary evidence is available proving without a shadow of doubt that he commanded the special SS troops, composed largely of convicted criminals, who suppressed the Warsaw rising with unsurpassed brutality in September-October 1944.

If you want to know more about the Reinefarth case, you can hire a special documentary film on 16 mm film called "Holiday on Sylt" from:

Plato Films Ltd.
18 Greek St.
London W.1.

ONE OUT OF 600

Move Against Nazi Jurist

In the past two years the Committee for German Unity in East Berlin has published the names and details of the crimes of over 600 nazi jurists who have been re-employed in leading capacities in West Germany.

All the details published have been based on original court files now in the possession of the authorities of the German Democratic Republic, and the Republic has offered to make all this evidence available to the West German officials who should be responsible for tracking down and punishing these war criminals.

Finally, on December 19th 1958, after many months of delay and after repeated questions in the House of Commons by Labour M.P.s, one of the six hundred was actually arrested.

The man arrested was Dr Otto Schweinsberger, today senior public prosecutor in Frankfurt, West Germany. During the war Schweinsberger was a senior military judge. His attitude towards the nazis and their crimes can best be shown by a few details of a case with which he dealt in 1942. A nazi soldier named Weisheit had been put under arrest and was due to be brought to trial on a charge of "illegally" murdering 75 Jews, including many women and children. Millions of Jews were being "legally" murdered at this time by the nazis, but the murders carried out by Weisheit had not been officially ordered or authorised.

Dr Schweinsberger was detailed to try the case. He thereupon in a letter to the military judicial authorities of the 40th Panzer Corps, to which he was attached, stated that the would acquit the murderer. If his brother judges on the bench should disagree with acquittal "he would regard this as a verdict contrary to the principles of National Socialism and would report the case to the Reichsfuehrer SS" (Heinrich Himmler). He stated that he felt bound to take this step as a result of his oath as official and his oath as a member of the nazi party.

One of the 600 nazi jurists has been arrested, owing to the pressure of public indignation.

What about the other five hundred and ninety nine?

Picture Paper Offer

Would you like a trial copy of "GDR REVIEW", pocket-size picture magazine published in the German Democratic Republic?

A free trial copy of the magazine, and information on how to subscribe, will be sent on application to:

GDR Review
Verlag Zeit im Bild
Bergmannstrasse 46
Dresden A 19
German Democratic Republic.

The magazine is published monthly in English, French, German, Spanish and Swedish. When asking for a specimen copy specify which language you would like.

Plan For 1959

Industrial production in the German Democratic Republic will increase by over 11%, according to the economic plan now being worked out in detail, it was officially announced in Berlin on December 20th. Increased production of consumer goods, and greatly increased imports of such goods will mean that much more will be available in the shops. The increased supply per family will be over 1000 marks — nearly £100.

Full Agreement With Poland

The German Democratic Republic and Poland are in full agreement on all current political problems, stated a communique signed in Warsaw on December 14th, at the conclusion of the visit paid to Poland by an official delegation from the Democratic Republic.

The communique was signed by the Prime Ministers and the First Party Secretaries of the two countries. In particular the two countries reiterated their agreement on the Rapacki plan for an atom-free zone in Europe, and on the new Soviet plan for the creation of a West Berlin Free City.

From Baker to Bestseller

By Joan Becker

A tall, sandy-moustached baker whose books have become best-sellers moved out of his comfortable Berlin apartment a couple of years ago and returned to a country life in Mecklenburg.

"I grew up under high forest winds, in the drone of midsummer, in biting frost and in lush spring days" says Erwin Strittmatter, noted writer of Democratic Germany, "where cows looked into my cradle and snorting horses sprayed my napkins.

"It came about in my hard and chequered life that when I was forty I came to live in the newest street in Berlin. Cars rattled past six floors below me along the broad double street while I wrote about the peasants' difficult start in the countryside after 1945 ...

"A writer cannot go on indefinitely writing, talking and enjoying art. He must restock with new experiences the invisible store from which he draws his material. In my case a longing for physical work was added. I carted earth from the building sites up into my apartment and planted quantities of pot-plants in it. I had a dog and a cat; but my longing for a country life only increased. The fine flowerbeds and lawns in our street did not console me. The city confined me. I felt the day approaching when I should no longer be able to write."

This love of the country, of ordinary people and things, is something which runs all through Erwin Strittmatter's books. His father was a baker and small farmer and Strittmatter himself started out as a baker's apprentice. He later worked on the land, in factories, as a waiter, on a fur farm, before he was conscripted into the Wehrmacht.

He began to write for publication only after 1945, when he had settled down in the country again. His first book was a collection of essays and articles which he had written for provincial newspapers.

Two of his books, "The Ox-Cart Driver" (1950) and his latest and most successful, "The Miracle Man" (1958), are largely autobiographical. They give a startlingly vivid picture of the problems which faced boys leaving poverty-stricken homes to make their own way in the world with little education, no money and no experience — through the bitter years between the two world wars, in a Germany moving towards fascism.

Erwin Strittmatter received his first National Prize from the government of the German Democratic Republic for his play, "Katzgraben" (1953), about village life after the big Junker estates had been broken up by the Land Reform in 1945—1946 in East Germany. The play was produced by Bertolt Brecht in Berlin. A second National Prize was awarded him for "Tinko" (1955), a charming book about a little boy who had lived with his grandparents while his father was away at the war and as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union. Tinko could get used to new ways of living and working, but his grandfather clung desperately to his little farm and died without understanding what was happening around him.

Strittmatter's latest and best book, "The Miracle Man", written after he had returned to a country life, takes Stanislaus Buedner from his childhood before World War I through the Weimar Republic and the nazi period down to the last months of World War II.

Stanislaus got his nickname, the "Miracle Man", after he discovered he could hynotise simple-minded people. There is a delightful description of how he discovered this gift at his confirmation party:

" . . . Stanislaus did not bother about the confirmation party. He wandered about in the yard and in the garden. He was bored. The new suit was uncomfortable. His high stiff collar already had black finger marks on it. He let the young goats out of their stall and enjoyed their awkward skipping and jumping for a while. He found a broody hen in the henhouse. It pecked angrily at his hand, so he took it out of its nest and tossed it up into the air 'You'll have to get out of that habit!' he sa d.

"The sudden toss confused the hen. Stanislaus laid it on its back and tapped with his finger on its beak. 'Not another sound out of you, you understand!'

"The hen remained on its back. It let its legs drop and lay there as if dead. Only its eyes stared upwards

Author Strittmatter at work: we don't know why he wears a hat either

and moved a little. Stanislaus stared at the hen's shifting eyes. The hen did not stir. Stanislaus took fright. He had killed a hen on his confirmation day. Punishments would rain down upon him. He must remove all signs of his crime. Later on Father Gustav would think the hen had been seized by a hawk. Stanislaus rushed for a spade. He shovelled up the lifeless hen; but the hen got back on to its legs and ran off.

"He snatched the hen up a second time, tossed it in the air and laid it on its back. It lay quite still again. This time Stanislaus clapped his hands and called 'Shoo! Shoo'. The hen jumped up and ran away.

"Stanislaus caught another hen and it lay still, too, as long as he wanted. What a wonderful confirmation game! He caught the hens one after another and made them go stiff.

"Eight hens lay on the steps of the henhouse, and just as Stanislaus was tossing the cock up into the air his father came out of the house. His confirmation cigar fell out of his mouth. 'Why, the boy's mad!' he shouted.

"The women rushed out. They stared at the hens' corpses. The cock lay beside them now, with its wings hanging, as if it had been shot.

'Bring a rope' called Gustav, 'and help me tie up the madman!'

"Lena looked for a rope. Stanislaus grinned. Gustav hardly dared look at his son. He might attack him before the rope turned up! Stanislaus clapped his hands and called 'Shoo! Shoo!' The hens sprang up and ran cackling over the yard. The cock screamed piercingly from hurt pride . . .

"There stood Stanislaus facing the confirmation guests. Father Gustav stood anxiously in the background. How easily the boy could attack him; then he would be lying like a corpse on the ground too. . . . Stanislaus had to show his father how he had laid the hens out. Father Gustav tried it out himself. And the hens lay down for him too, until he shooed them away again. 'There's no telling what a man can do, is there?' he said. 'Maybe you've inherited the power from me after all.'"

At fourteen Stanislaus was apprenticed to a baker; he had to change his job very often during his apprenticeship and the years which followed — mainly because of difficulties connected with women, some of them uproariously funny. Stanislaus was very susceptible, but he always seemed to choose the wrong girl.

All through these years Stanislaus read voraciously too — everything he could lay his hands upon, from the village schoolmaster's confirmation gifts, "The Psychology of the Bedwetter, Parts I and II" and "Religious Instruction in the 3-Class Primary School with special reference to the best stories in the Old Testament", to books on love and popular science.

In his early twenties he spent most of his pay on a correspondence course which "gave him advice on how to plan his studies — advice for students who had plenty of time. There were no suggestions for night students who had shovelled coal all day in the bakery cellar. . . . or for bakers whose work began at five in the morning and who crept out of the floury atmosphere of the bakehouse up to a stuffy attic."

Stanislaus wrote poetry too, and this was how he got involved in a bitter love affair with Lillian, an extraordinarily stupid and heartless girl who fell quite easily into fascist ways of thinking. Lillian Poeschel was studying to be a girls' leader, and her reading included a pamphlet called "Fundamental Traits of Race Heredity."

". . . Stanislaus had to march back and forth through the room. Lillian wanted to test what she had read on his figure. In this way he could help her and be a little useful . . . Lill an felt his calf. Could that be an caress? Then he had to walk back and forth again. 'You have typical Jew's legs' said Lillian.

"Stanislaus studied his baker's bow-legs ruefully . . . 'What!?' Papa Poeschel jumped up and boxed Lillian's ears, snatched the pamphlet away from her and flung it into the fire. It was all over in a second.

'You red socialist!' hissed Lillian. Papa Poeschel boxed her ears again."

The next day Stanislaus' book of poems was returned by the publishers with a note which ended: "they are lacking in the fighting power which our high and important times demand."

Stanislaus' reaction — he volunteered for the cavalry — shows with what little understanding he had so far wandered through the world.

The second part of the book is called "Many are a long time getting there . . ." and here Stanislaus' experiences in the Wehrmacht, with its brutality and ruthlessness, finally forced him to understand what he had to do — to get out and join the other side.

The book ends with a romantic episode — of a purely romantic kind which occurs nowhere earlier. Two Greek girl partisans help him and his poet friend Johannes Weissblatt to escape from their company which is occupying one of the Greek islands. They find temporary refuge in a monastery.

Looking down from the hill they see the boat with the two girls as a tiny spot far away on the blue sea. "'What I should like to know' said one monk, 'is whether they loved us'. The other monk did not answer at once. He was sure now that the boat was getting smaller and farther away from the island.

'The way we are now' he said. 'you couldn't expect it' ".

It has been suggested that Strittmatter has got stuck in the past; no sequel to "The Ox-Cart Driver" appeared before he returned in "The Miracle Man" to the same between-war period.

"Katzgraben" and "Tinko" are a partial answer to this; but for such a full and rounded-off picture of the post-war period we shall certainly have to wait some time. People and things have changed enormously in the last thirteen years, and are still in the process of change. A writer must surely reach a certain height from which he can pause and look back and recognise the events which really contribute to a person's development.

"The Miracle Man" is just such a rounded-off picture and thousands of readers are waiting for Strittmatter to tell them in the same richly humorous, humane and convincing way what happened to Stanislaus after the war.

Win a New Reader

Fill in the name and address of a friend, work-mate or acquaintance on the form below, and send it to

Democratic German Report
Friedrichstrasse 167/III
Berlin W 8, Germany

We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

Name .....

Address .....

"LE MONDE" VIEWS DEMOCRATIC GERMANY

("Le Monde", leading Paris newspaper, published on December 5th a long article on the German Democratic Republic by a French reporter who had just completed a tour of the Republic. On this page we reprint parts of this article.)

The economists of the (West) German Federal Republic regard it as good form to spend their time pointing out mistakes and shortages in East Germany. Such shortcomings really exist, but at the same time there has been much progress there.

The Two Year Plan (1949-50) was mainly aimed at making good war-damage and losses owing to Soviet dismantling; by the end of 1950 production had reached a level 10% above the 1936 figure.

In the First Five Year Plan (1950-55) the German Democratic Republic aimed at an autonomous socialist economy, recognising as a fact the division of Germany into two states. During this period industrial production made a huge step forwards, doubling itself in less then six years: this means that the rate of development was higher than in the Federal Republic, and as high as in the Soviet Union ... The development in the German Democratic Republic appeared like a miracle to West German observers, but only because they had shut their eyes to the great efforts being made there ...

Apart from the steel works, which used to belong to the Flick trust, and the chemical plant, which once belonged to IG Farben, industrial concentration was not pushed ahead as fast as in West Germany ... In many parts of industry, private ownership has maintained an important position up to the present. Private factories today employ 47% of the clothing makers, 39% of the wood workers, and 32% of the leather workers. The 12,000 private firms employ 441,000 workers, that is 16% of the total labour force.

Is the position of these private factories threatened? The German Investment Bank proposed not long ago that they should take loans from state capital with which they could modernise their factories. A young 33-year-old private employer explained to me that this state participation gives the private enterprise a semi-socialist character, and ensures its place in the planned economy. As an explanation for his optimism he explained: "The development towards socialism is unavoidable, but the private factories accord with the psychological habits which will not disappear for a long time." ...

Soft coal is East Germany's most important natural reserve. Production of soft coal rose from 101 million tons in 1936 to 200 million in 1955 and 216 million in 1957. In 1956 soft coal provided 78.5% of the thermal power production. Power production per head of the population was already higher in 1955 than in West Germany.

Soft coal produces not only electric power, but also forms the basis for the production of synthetic fuels in such great plants as Leuna, where 29,000 people are employed. It is also the basis for the production of dyes, rubber, synthetic fibres, and chemicals, and production is so big that the German Democratic Republic holds sixth place in the world in chemical production. An invention of great importance has been the method used for obtaining smelting coke from soft coal. The special plant built for this purpose at Lauchhammer will produce more than one million tons of coke and 142,000 tons of tar this year.

East Germany is at present producing all types of machinery, from imposing 370-ton wire machines for making cables 10 centimetres in diameter, down to the most complicated precision instruments. In the communist world it is second only to the Soviet Union in machine production ...

The "May 8th" nationally owned works which up till 1945 belonged to the Niles company, produces twice as much as in 1940, although 90 per cent of the qualified engineers working there are former workers. Half of its production is exported, a quarter to the people's democracies and the other quarter to Sweden, Egypt, India, Syria, West Germany and Austria.

In the chemical industry, where production during the first Five Year Plan rose by 92.7 per cent above the 1950 volume, the plan quotas for sulphuric acid, caustic soda, artificial manures, synthetic rubber and Perlon have been over-topped ...

The workers' wages correspond to those paid in the foundries, and social services are the same as in all nationally owned enterprises.

The German Democratic Republic is also second to the Soviet Union in chemical production within the family of socialist countries.

Economic recovery went hand in hand with a considerable increase in the workers' purchasing power, especially since 1953. The production of consumer goods was higher than originally planned. While total industrial production from 1950 to 1955 increased by 90 per cent, the production of woollen yarn increased 2.2 times, that of cotton fibres 2.7 times, of butter 2.1 times and of cheese 9.2 times.

Does this mean that everything is in order in the German Democratic Republic? Obviously not.

The textiles, which contain a percentage of cellular wool, do not satisfy buyers' need. Leather is still very expensive ... The three car models, which are technically of excellent quality, especially the P 70 model, "Zwickau", the body of which is made entirely of hard synthetic material, are considerably more expensive than West German models.

An analysis of wage increases between 1950 and 1955, on the other hand, show that workers in some branches of industry, particularly miners and chemical workers, came off badly under the existing system of working norms.

That is why, after the main emphasis was placed on the development of basic industries during the first Five Year Plan, the second Five Year Plan will be able to consolidate progress already achieved. It is planned to slow down industrial development and to concentrate more on agriculture.

I was particularly impressed by the prosperity of the cooperative peasants whom I visited in Schorba near Jena. Seventeen of the twenty peasants in this little village have joined the cooperative. The local machine and tractor station hires out to them the ten tractors and the necessary machines.

The cooperative has a house of culture in the village, which contains a fine library, a television room, a big hall and bar, where you can get good beer. The newly built or newly repaired houses are well furnished and there are a comparatively large number of motor vehicles: seventeen motor bicycles and six cars, including a fine new Wartburg. Its owner was just polishing it up to drive into Jena after finishing his work in the cooperative piggery.

Collectivisation of agriculture, in addition to nationalisation of industry and trade are gradually transforming the German Democratic Republic, which differs greatly from West Germany, whose economic and social structure represents a continuation of the structure of pre-war Germany.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

There has been such a lot of blah-blah in western newspapers recently about the "stalwart western democracy" which rules in West Berlin that it might be a good idea to take a closer look at one special aspect of this phenomenon — the police and the courts in West Beriln.

Let us start with the courts: in West Berlin, as in West Germany, the judges and the public prosecutors are mainly jurists who served the nazis without any hesitation, and include a fair proportion of men directly responsible for the execution of hundreds of anti-nazis, both German and foreign. There are at least 23 judges and public prosecutors working today in West Berlin courts who held similar situations under Hitler. Here are a few details from the records of several of them, selected at random.

Death for "Sedition"

Hans Gfroerer was district court judge in Berlin during the nazi period, and he occupies the same position today. On January 3rd 1945, only a few months before the end of the war, he sentenced 65-year-old Leo Juessen to death for sedition. His offence was that he had said to his landlady "Stettin will become a field of rubble, and we shall wade in blood up to our knees". Judge Gfroerer stated in his summing up on the case: "The accused knew well that his remarks were calculated to undermine confidence in victory: in the course of his remarks he also made a particularly despicable attack on the person of the Fuehrer. He must be finally blotted out as a danger to the German people."

Leo Juessen was executed: Judge Gfroerer dispenses justice in a West Berlin court.

Then there is the case of Herr Wehl, onetime judge in the nazi "Special Court" in Berlin, and now district court judge in West Berlin. On February 2nd 1944 he sentenced three Dutch slave labourers to death. The Dutchmen, Kornelius Straatman, Hendrick van Geel and Johannes Reyntje had been deported to Germany by the nazis and kept on starvation rations. Police evidence was given at the trial that the accused had immediately eaten the chicken they had stolen "because they were hungry".

The three Dutch slave labourers were executed: Judge Wehl dispenses justice in a West Berlin court.

And there is the case of Dr Hinke, onetime judge in the nazi "Special Court" in Berlin, now appeals court judge in West Berlin. In 1942, 43, and 44 he sentenced a total of at least ten foreign slave labourers from France, Italy and Czechoslovakia to death for offences against the fascist special laws.

The slave labourers were executed: Judge Hinke dispenses justice in West Berlin.

And so we could go on, for page after bloodstained page. But now let us turn to the other side of the story; what sort of justice do these gentlemen and their colleagues dispense? Their idea of justice comes out particularly clearly in a whole series of cases affecting the pension and restitution rights of people who were persecuted by the nazis.

Under West Berlin laws, passed in the post-war heyday when anti-fascism was not yet frowned upon, victims of nazism were entitled to compensation for the imprisonment which they had suffered. Nowadays, every sort of excuse is produced to cancel such pensions and restitution, and this in its turn has led to a series of appeals by the anti-fascists concerned. Let us have a closer look at one or two of these cases.

There is, for instance, the case of the West Berlin citizen Oskar Reissing, a metal worker. In 1937, a convinced anti-fascist, he made his way illegally to Republican Spain and enlisted in the International Brigade. At the end of the Spanish civil war he was interned in France, and in 1941 handed over to the Gestapo. He spent the following four years in concentration camp.

Clear Case

It would appear to any sensible person to be a clear case of an anti-fascist who had suffered for his convictions and was entitled to restitution. Restitution was refused, and Oskar Reissing lodged an appeal. The West Berlin District Court rejected the appeal: the reasons for the rejection need to be seen to be believed: "The National Socialist authorities did not imprison the appellant because he was an opponent of National Socialisms, but because he had enlisted in a non-German armed force."

Even more fantastic is the case of Frau Ella Burghause of West Berlin. Her husband was sent to concentration camp and killed by the nazis, and under West Berlin law she should be entitled to a pension. The pension was refused, Frau Burghause appealed, and the West Berlin District Court rejected the appeal. The argument of the Appeal Court went like this: The Gestapo arrested Herr Max Burghause because he had given food to Poles: giving food to Poles was forbidden by German military law: therefore the Gestapo had been quite right in arresting Herr Burghause. The court ruled that he had not been arrested as an opponent of nazism, but simply as an offender against military law which applied to all Germans. "In addition there is no evidence that there was any interference with the human rights of the Poles with whom Max Burghause had contact" the court stated.

This last sentence is so fantastic that I expect some readers will believe I an exaggerating. If any reader is seriously interested in following up the case I shall be glad to send him the full German text of the court decision, handed down by a West Berlin court on June 14th 1958.

Same Subject

Just while we are on the subject, it may be of interest to give a few details of the past activities of some of the key police officers in West Berlin. Chief Inspector Kurt Krummholz, chief of the mobile police squad in the West Berlin borough of Steglitz, was Major in the nazi SS, and served in this capacity with the nazi occupation police in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Hungary.

Walter Boosfeld, who serves under Krummholz, was an officier in the SS "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", and worked for a time as guard in Dachau concentration camp.

Chief Inspector Wilhelm Graurock, today working in the central office of the West Berlin police, was formerly an SS captain and served with the nazi occupation police in Czechoslovakia, Croatia and Denmark.

Commissar Wilhelm Johannings-meier of the West Berlin police was formerly SS lieutenant, and commanded an SS police unit in the occupied area of the Soviet Union.

And so we could go on for pages. This small sample must suffice.

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